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MEMORANDUM

Parti ouvrier social-démocrate serbe

BY THE SERBIAN SOCIALIST PARTY

UPON THE CONDITIONS IN OCCUPIED SERBIA

PRESENTED TO THE

RUSSO-HOLLANDO-SCANDINAVIAN COMMITTEE

IN STOCKHOLM

WITH A PREFACE BY

CAMILLE HUYSMANS,

SECRETARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST BUREAU

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May, 1918.

The following appeal is signed by two eye-witnesses of the infamous acts of the Austro-Bulgarians in the occupied territory of Serbia. The first of these, Dushan Popovitch, permanent secretary of the Serbian Socialist party, has not left Serbia and since the evacuation of 1915, he was able to see, on the spot, all that the invaders have done to exterminate an entire people. The second, Katzlerovitch, is a deputy of the Socialist party. He took part in the retreat thrcugh Albania but after arriving in Switzerland he decided to return to Serbia. The Austro-Hungarian Legation at Berne accorded him every facility and in the month of June, 1916, he left for Kraguevatz in Serbia. M. Katzlerovitch is a Serbian "Zimmerwaldian" and before returning to Serbia he had violently attacked the Serbian Government and Parliament, demanding an immediate peace. The Wolff Agency hastened to reproduce their attacks and exploit them against Serbia. M. Katzlerovitch is therefore a witness particularly qualified to tell the truth regarding the horrors of the Austro-Bulgarian regime.

"Messrs. Popovitch and Katzlerovitch went from Serbia to Stockholm for the Socialist conference. The Central Powers believed that the two Serbian socialists would play the game of the internationalists and that is why they permitted them to go to Stockholm. There the Serbian delegates, once they had escaped from the Austro-Germans, drew up this appeal to the civilized world, to protest against the regime of extermination practised in Serbia. They handed it in the month of November to M. Camille Huysmans, who, in making it public, thus described it in his introduction: "It is not a work of hate; it is a cry of distress."

In view of the documentary value of this memorandum, we publish it in its full form, regardless of the fact that we do not share the political ideas expressed on this occasion by the Serbian Socialist Party. As to the behavior of the German troops in Serbia, described by Messrs. Popovitch and Katzlerovitch as having been less barbarous than the Bulgarian and the Austro-Hungarian, we make a point of issuing herewith an account of the German military expedition in Serbia by Oskar Maurus Fontana, a German writer and a Reserve Officer who accompanied the German army to Serbia.

SERBIAN PRESS BUREAU,

Voyslav M. Yovanovitch

PREFACE.

The war has made three martyr nations: the Belgians, the Serbs and the Armenians of Turkey.

Germany has martyred Belgium; Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria have martyred Serbia.

Turkey has martyred Armenia.

In all three countries the aggressor has attacked an inoffensive and defenceless population.

In Belgium he has put to the sword hundreds of unarmed men, women and children.

In Serbia, he has been even more pitiless. He has claimed his victims by the thousand.

In Armenia, his bestialty has known no bounds. He has killed with Sadic fury.

Belgium has lost many civilians and will lose yet more under a regime of insufficient feeding and unendurable oppression.

Serbia has lost practically the help of her population, and unless immediate help is forthcoming, men, women and children will die like flies.

Armenia, alas, cannot count the number of her victims. Will she ever after the War be able to make a list of those who survived and were reduced to slavery?

The methods of murder and destruction have been applied with greater brutality and shamelessness in proportion as one neared the East, where human life is held comparatively cheap.

The objects of the aggressor were not the same in each case.

The generous Germany of Luther certainly did not desire to exterminate the Belgians. To begin with, the latter are too numerous! But she wanted to punish them for their unexpected resistance. She was not a secular enemy. But she had recourse to blood letting in order to terrorize the vanquished and to teach them docility for the future.

Catholic Austria has done nothing but carry on her traditional policy. Her aggression of yesterday was not accidental. During the whole of the 19th Century, she has never ceased to attack a young and gallant people, simply because

it is conscious of its national strength. And the slaughter was compassed with the clear purpose of total destruction. In the Imperial Army, it was the Serbs of Austria who were always sent for preference into the fire, because one wanted to get rid of them - and the Serbs of Serbia have been starved or hanged, interned or put in chains with cynically refined cruelty.

And the kindred Bulgars belonging to the ruling circles have helped the Austrians in this monstrous task! They desired to be revenged for past defeats and they have remained deaf to the voice of the blood.

The Sons of the Prophet pursued an indentical aim. They, too desired the extermination of a people. And, we must admit it, they have accomplished it conscientiously, like experienced scavengers. They have spared nothing. They have considered neither age nor sex. They have made a clean sweep. They have carried out Sultan Selim's command to the letter. To violence to the men they have added bestiality to women and even to children. And the Christians of Germany have watched unmoved, this slaughter of the Christians of Armenia.

While attacking the human beings the invador has not forgotten inanimate objects. He has sought to ruin the victim of the occupation economically. He has taken his food, He has taken away his machinery. He has deprived him of the primary necessities. And he has crowned everything by the deportation of labour.

One would think that the General Headquarters of the Turks, Austrians and Germans were acting by agreement.

And how have they justified these abominations?

In Belgium, they invented the legend of the franc-fireurs.

In Armenia, they invented the legend of conspiracies.

In Serbia, the Austrians invented nothing. They have too much imagination to delight in the clumsy pseudo-scientific imaginations of the German Government. Since the days of the Agram trial they have acquired too much experience to re-edit a subterfuge which brought upon them the moral censure of the whole of Europe. They have acted boldly, without hypocrisy and, taking it all round, this attitude strikes us as being the most decent. They have the courage of their crimes.

I do not mean to hold the peoples of Germany, of Austria-Hungary, of Bulgaria and Turkey responsible for all this. I know what protests have rung through the Parliaments of Berlin, of Vienna, of Budapest and Sofia. I am convinced that thousands of Mussulmans condemn the policy of the Young Turks, and if proof is required I need only quote the touching pamphlet by Fayez El-Gosein, a Bedouin of Hauran. But what matters is that the Socialists, at least, of the Central Empires, <u>should know and should act</u>. And that is why my Serbian and American comrades have judged it useful to do as we have done in Belgium. To what is left of the civilized world they denounce what has been done and is being done and they appeal at least to the solidarity of thou who lay claim to spare their ideals of humanity and justice.

And if they are told in reply that also on the other side of the barricade there are deplorable conditions. If they are told in reply, as I have already been told, that prisoners have been ill-treated elsewhere, we shall declare very clearly, that the Socialist protest must regard the misdeeds of one side as well as the crimes of the other. As for me, I refuse to admit the axiom: "Krieg ist Krieg", "War is War". This phrase is nothing but a covert form of moral cowardice.

The Socialists have no right to take no interest in the fate of other human beings.

For this reason I thank my friends Popovitch, Secretary of the Serbian Socialist Party, and Katzlerovitch, Deputy in the Skupshtina, for having written this pamphlet, which is addressed to public opinion, without distinction.

It is not a work of hate,
It is a cry of distress!

Stockholm, December 10th, 1917.

CAMILLE HUYSMANS,

Secretary of the International
Socialist Bureau.

M E M O R A N D U M

By the Serbian Socialist Party

Upon the Situation in Occupied Serbia,

Presented to the

Russo-Hollando-Scandinavian Committee.

Opinions as to the culpability of Serbia in the present war are divided according to whether the holders of these opinions belong to one or the other of the two belligerent and enemy camps. But what is past all discussion for both parties is that Serbia is one of the most sorely-tried victoms of the world war. The burden of the war as it has fallen upon this small and weak country is so crushing and so bloody that there is no longer any equitable proportion between crime and punishment, even if we assume that Serbia had committed the gravest faults. Still less can one take up this view if one takes into account that during the whole of last century the Serbian nation - an abstraction constructed of secondary factors and responsibilities in the third degree - was in a state of legitimate defence against the brutal policy of conquest on the part a great reactionary neighbouring State, namely Austria.

The whole world is more or less aware of the great distress into which Serbia has been plunged by the war, and of the sacrifices entailed upon her by the latter. But what is known of it is very superficial and incomplete. The object of our memorandum is to complete this general information by facts and data collected in occupied Serbia, in order to show the pressing need of speedy and efficacious help, both material and moral for this country cut off from all the world and forsaken by it.

On the Eve of the Occupation and during the Catastrophe.

Serbia had already suffered great losses since the first year of the war. During the very first months of the war she had to repel two great Austrian offensives, one in September and one in November, 1914. Twice the existence of Serbia hung only by a thread and twice she parried the mortal blow. But these events entailed enormous losses as well among the soldiers as among the civil population. Appalled by the horrors

of the first Austro-Hungarian invasion in the neighbourhood of the town of Shabatz and in order to escape from the enemy troops which were steadily venturing further, Serbian families were compelled to fly wholesale at an unfavourable season, into the interior of the country.

This second invasion was followed by a terrible epidemic which raged all winter and throughout the Spring of 1915. Hundreds of thousands of men (including 140 doctors) perished principally of typhus. The result was that already in June, 1915, the total number of war victims reached the figure of 500,000.

Then came in October, 1915, the third invasion under Mackensen, then the Bulgarian attack in the flank. These events were followed by the migration of a whole people - women, children and old men - across the Albanian mountains which had hitherto known no travellers but enthusiastic explorers or blase adventurers who no longer set any value upon their life of boredom. This migration was made on foot, through the terrific frosts of winter and autumn in the months of November and December. Of 39,000 boys between 15 and 18 years of age, taken away by the commanders of the Serbian army, 31,000 perished in Albania of cold and hunger, not to speak of the considerable number of children, women, old men and soldiers who succumbed there. In Corfu, cholera lay in wait for the famished and mortally exhausted soldiers. The total number of Serbian victims reached the figure of 800,000 and even of 1,000,000 according to the opinion of well informed persons. This was already almost one-fourth of the total population of Serbia according to the statistics established after the peace of Bucharest. The general statistics included a considerable number of Albanians and Turks, which means that the rate of mortality among the Serb population proper was even far greater. As for the Serbia that was in existence before the Balkan wars and forms in every respect the neucleus of the Serb nation, one may say without exaggeration that pretty well one-half of her population had perished.

Nor should it be forgotten that the fate of the Serbs living Austria-Hungary during the war has been no better. The policy of the ruling classes of Austria-Hungary has been to solve the Serbian Austrian during the war quite simply by exterminating as many Serbs as possible. The soldiers of Bosnia, Herzegovina, Dalmatia, those from the old military frontier of Lika, from Croatia, from Slavonia, the Syrmia, Bachka and the Banat of Temesvar - all of them Serbo-Croat lands - were sent where the fighting was most dangerous, while a regime of prison, the gibbet and famine were applied at home to the rest of the population. One need only read, for instance, the speech delivered by the Croat deputy Guido Hreljanovich

a few months ago in the Hungarian Parliament, concerning the barbarity prevailing in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This speech, as also the most recent one by Dr. Antun Tresich-Pavichitch, in the Austrian Reichsrat, October 17, 1917) contains the most horrifying details. It was received in silence by the Hungarian chamber. We will not dwell upon this further. These facts lie outside our jurisdiction. We leave it to the Austro-Hungarian Social Democracy to fight this barbarous Government, whose aim is to prevent all development of the Serb people and to destroy its national consciousness. We will merely state the following. The Serbo-Croat nation which numbered more than ten million souls and whose annual increase amounted to 100,000, has lost so many of its members during this "war of liberation" that it cannot hope to reach its old figure before thirty years after the war.

The Occupation.

When in the Autumn of 1915, the conquerors crossed the Save, the Danube and the Timok, all Serbia was as it were divided into two. One part presented the melancholy picture of a graveyard and the other that of a hospital. The invaders were no longer faced by a redoubtable adversary whose resistance had to be broken, but by a sorely stricken country which according to the most elementary humanitarian principles had a claim to be treated with consideration.

It is true that Mackensen within the first days of his entry into the country issued a solemn proclamation in which he invited the entire civil population to return quickly to its homes and resume its ordinary occupations, because - thus it was assured by the famous General - the war would not be waged against the peaceful population but against armed and fighting forces. But these were only empty words. Every Government of Occupation in Serbia has been nothing but a permanent war upon the peaceful population. And moreover it has not been a government of occupation at all but rather a punitive expedition on the part of Austria-Hungary and still more on that of Bulgaria, and this is the word which most correctly and most completely defines the character of the Austro-Hungarian and Bularian domination in Serbia. Serbia's enemies have felt from the very first, instinctively, that this country would not remain permanently in their possession. Therefore they made up their minds to render Serbia altogether incapable of carrying on her existence. Unfortunately they have already partially accomplished this task. It is therefore the duty of the civilized world to prevent them from carrying out their infamous purpose to the end.

Passage of the German Troops.

It was the German army which during its march through Serbia in October, November and December of 1915, furnished the precedent for this horrible policy. These troops did not content themselves with the formidable booty represented by the vast property of the State abandoned everywhere in the greatest disorder and which, according to the statements of the German officers could only be compared with the booty they reaped in Russia after the break through at Gorlicz. Besides this, the Serbian people was compelled to entertain gratuitously and for several months these countless German legions, for whom the Balkans were merely a highroad on their conquering advance towards Asia Minor. The poor Serbian was compelled out of his humble means to support the grandiose plans of the German imperialists and to take part in the realization of their aims.

All that was necessary for the army and very often much that was not, was so to say snatched out of the mounts of the population consisting mainly of women and children, and that without any compunction or compensation. It is true that sometimes they were given requisition tickets in exchange, but this was done very rarely and always in some non-valid form. It happened for instance that poor ignorant peasants, whose last cow had been taken were found in possession of requisition tickets bearing the following legend in German: "Peter Karageorgevitch must pay" etc. But what is worse is that in most cases the property of the public was destroyed without any necessity, out of pure spite. It would be easy to quote countless instances of this perverse and purposeless rage for destruction on the part of the German troops with regard to the property of the peasants, including cases which fall within the scope of camp humour, but which really cost the poor population too dear. We think it, however, our duty to declare that on this occasion the German troops, although they did not in the least respect the property of the people, never showed themselves barbarous towards the population itself. We do not know of a single case in which the German soldiers were guilty of murder or outrage or of beating anybody. If there have been such cases, they were exceptional.

After the German hurricane had passed, came "normal" conditions. Order was established in Serbia. Let us see what manner of order it was, and is.

A. The Region occupied by Austria-Hungary.

1. The Economic Situation.

The economic life of Serbia had been disorganized and subjected to strain even before the occupation, more than has been the case in any of the other belligerent States. A far greater proportion of the population was mobilized in Serbia than anywhere else. The whole country was transformed into a veritable armed camp. After each enemy offensive and after each epidemic the last remnants of the male population in the towns and villages was called up with the result that all the labour that was left consisted of women, children and old men. Belgrade, the economic and commercial centre of Serbia was evacuated and abandoned by the population during the first days of the mobilization, because of its dangerous position from a military point of view. The same thing happened throughout the whole of Northern Serbia, the zone extending along the Save and the Danube as well as in Western Serbia along the Drina. Thus during the very first days of the war, all economic and cultural life was brought to a standstill in the richest regions of our country, because they were all of them transformed into theatres of war and deluged with blood.

At the moment of the catastrophe a great emigration took place there among that part of the population which was best fitted for economic production. People left their homes, their workshops, their affairs and their fields en masse to go across Albania into the unknown world.

And what did the "bearers of culture" do under these conditions? To the terrible burden of the war which was already weighing heavily upon the population, they added the brutality, spoiliation and corruption of a regime of occupation and by their robbery brought all Serbia to economic ruin. What the Germans failed to "put in order" during their short stay of a few months, the Austrians and Hungarians have tidied up to perfection within two years.

Austria-Hungary loves above all things to lay stress upon the order-creating side of her activity in Serbia. The great neighbour state wished to prove to the whole world that her historic mission consists in curing the "fierce and rebellious" Serb nation of "politics" and educating it into habits of economy and industry. Now what has Austria-Hungary done during the last two years in order to encourage and stimulate the development of the economic and productive resources of Serbia?

More than 150,000 civilians interned by the Austrians.

The first act of the Government of occupation was to intern in Hungary and Austria more than 150,000 persons belonging to the civil population for no reason and without any military or political necessity. Hereby Serbia was deprived of the last reserves in the way of labour which were still at her disposal and countless families lost their last support. Hundreds of thousands of children, women and old men were thus condemned to die of starvation. An even more horrible fate was in store for those who were interned and the country was completely denuded of the working population which alone could have helped it to carry on. This was the first and the most important act of the Military Government in its work of economic and cultural "reorganization" of occupied Serbia. In the meantime this policy of internment is one of the cruellest chapters in the whole history of the Government of occupation and we will speak of it presently in greater detail.

Pillage and Economic Ruin.

After having seized upon the last remnants of the country's resources in labour, the Military Government proceeded similarly to requisition and it does so still unremittingly - everything indispensable for production, all material without which the future development of productive resources is altogether impossible. Serbia's most important factories have ceased to exist; the machinery has been dismantled and transported across the frontier, together with everything in the way of tools and raw material. Workshops were similarly dealt with.

Most of the shops were pillaged in the same way. The peasants are deprived of the last of their carts, horses and oxen. These poor people are compelled to furnish the Military authorities regularly with draught animals and other cattle, even if they do not possess any. There have been cases in which small peasant farmers have within eighteen months supplied the Austro-Hungarian authorities with fifteen oxen. They must find that oxen even if they don't own them at all. In that case they have to buy it at top prices or obtain it surreptitiously at the risk of their lives on the other side of the Morava in Bulgarian territory. It is their business to know where to find it but the animals have to be furnished, otherwise the peasant or the commune in question are compelled to pay a fabulous fine. It goes without saying that in consequence of this policy, Serbia, which is rich in

cattle and produce much live stock will soon be drprived of it altogether. The peasant can no longer fill his field, the artisan returns to find an empty workshop and the working man has to go unemployed because, of all the factories, nothing is left but the walls. Even assuming that after this war of extermination, there would still be hands capable of work in Serbia, the necessary material for work will be altogether lacking. This is the state of "economic improvement" in Serbia under the regime of the Austro-Hungarian Government of occupation.

Serbian Forests cut down to the last tree.

The axe is likewise a very important instrument in the spreading of Austria-Hungary culture. It is a favourable tool of the policy of occupation and a most powerful lever for encouraging economic development in the conquered domain. The great predilection of Austrians and Hungarians for timber is, by the way, already known by the example of Bosnia. Moreover there is nothing extraordinary or amazing in this, since forests represent the best source for acquiring wealth to parvenue capitalists and adventurers in all colonies. It is possible to guage the extent to which one country bears the character of a colony towards another by the figures of the export of timber and its by-products. In this respect, Bosnia stood remarkably nigh with regard to Austria. Just now it is Serbia's turn. What is being done today in Serbia as regards her forests, which are such an essential resource of a country like ours, is not merely exaggerated exploitation but down-right and complete devastation. Here is an example ! The Rogot forest, which was owned by the State was a very beautiful old and dense forest in the very heart of Serbia. It was worth several millions. Today this forest no longer exists; it has been cut down to the last tree. A wide and desolate expanse marks its former site. All the other forests of Serbia, some even larger and more valuable, like those of Kopaonik, Tara and Rudnik, have suffered the same fate. The sullen thud of the Austrian axe in the depth of the ancient forests of Shumadia rings like the blow of a hammer upon a coffin.

"Requisitions."

And while on the one hand the felling of timber proceeds apace, we have on the other hand the systematic and unintermittent expropriation of all that belongs to the population. This goes by the name of "requisition". Almost all the products of

the country even those which are indispensable in every household, metal utensils, etc., are requisitioned under the pretext of serving military needs. And they are paid for at absurd rates! Indeed, all this is only a veiled form of expropriation. The whole of the harvest is similarly requisitioned. Wheat is paid at the rate of 53 Austrian crowns per 100 kilogrammes. Dried prunes, one of Serbia's most important export products, are paid for at the rate of 10 crowns per 100 kgs. and that at a time when the Croatian Government is supplying the municipality of Vienna, by contract, with the same kind of prunes at a rate of 50 crowns per 100 kgs. Brandy, too, is requisitioned at a rate of from 40 to 50 crowns, to be resold later on to the innkeepers at rates of from 200 to 250 crowns, and the superior qualities even at 500 crowns per 100 litres. Oxen are paid for at 1,80 per kilogramme. And the peasant is not even entitled to be present when his ox is weighed! This is the business of the officers and officials who by reducing the weight to be paid for by one-half or thereabouts, make a very good thing out of it indeed. Most of the requisition tickets bear, generally speaking, a round number such as 100,150, 200 kgs., which is already in itself a clear indication of this official robbery on a vast scale. Pigs are bought for 1,50 to 2 crowns per kg. whereas in Austria-Hungary they fetch from 6 to 7 crowns. Apples, another important export article, are paid for at the rate of 25 to 40 crowns per 100 kg. to be resold at once for 80 to 100 crowns in Austria-Hungary. Nuts are requisitioned, likewise potatoes, beans, fruit, vegetables, eggs, - in one word, <u>everything.</u>

<u>Official robberies.</u>

An elaborately subtle system of fines pursues the same object. They are not a penalty imposed in the general interest of the community in order to enforce compliance with prescribed regulations, but a fresh means of despoiling the people and helping the military and civil employers to get rich quick.

Last summer, many inhabitants of Belgrade were compelled to pay fines ranging from 1000 to 1500 crowns for having exceeded the prescribed allowance of water by a few litres. Village administrations are sentenced for mere nothings or under perfectly ridiculous pretexts to pay fines of 2,000, 3,000 or 5,000 gold ducats (between 4,800 and 12,000 dollars). Even peasants have to pay their fines in gold or in cash. The intention is obvious. The Serbian peasant is to be deprived of

the last grain of gold left to him, perhaps, from the good old times of the age of patriarchal communism. Sometimes the authorities go so far in this avidity to obtain gold, that e. g. they presumed one day to force the safe of a well-known merchant in Belgrade in order to seize the 2000 "napoleons" deposited there and to reimburse him for the same at the rate of 25 crowns apiece at a time when their value on the market was 70 crowns. And this is not an isolated case! But let no one misapprehend our purpose. We have no intention of bewailing the fate of the Capitalists, who have more than one opportunity during the war to recoup themselves for losses sustained by a tenfold larger gain. We merely wish to point out that if such proceedings are permitted against the well-to-do citizens of Belgrade, the fate of the peasant in villages remote from the capital, the poor peasant handed over at discretion to the unlimited and tyrannical power of the local gendarme must be even more pitiful.

As regards the <u>forcible depreciation of the rate of exchange for Serbian money</u> it is neither more nor less than robbery under arms. No sooner had Serbia been conquered than an order appeared directing under threat of the severest penalties, that the Serbian franc (dinar) was not to be worth more than half an Austrian crown. As the inhabitants possessed no other kind of money they were obliged to circulate the Serbian which passed in this way at an absurdly low rate into the hands of the Austrians, Germans and Bulgars. In this way, both the authorities and private persons could indulge in most lucrative speculation in Serbian money which, thanks to the high standard of the metal, is worth twice as much as Austrian money in the international market.

Even today you can, in Austria, privately change 100 Serbian dinars for something over 120 Austrian crowns. The loss caused in this way to the Serbian population, especially to the poorer people who cannot, like the rich, afford to hold back their money until the most propitious moment, is enormous and amounts to many millions. The saddest part about this speculation is that the poor women, children and old men, forsaken by all the world - had nothing but their little savings to fall back on and were thus compelled to reduce by half the small amount of food they had so far been able to procure. All these refined methods of exploitation must obviously end by exhausting what is left of the wealth of the country. In many cases moreover this exploitation is practised openly, brutally and in the most barefaced fashion. Especially during the earlier months of the occupation, it was the custom to force the doors of houses or shops belonging to absentee Serbian citizens, and to seize everything that happened to please

any officer, police agent or police spy that came along. Many private dwellings, especially in Belgrade, were looted in this way. Everything was taken, from the linen and the furniture to the pianos, which were generally sent across the Save as "war booty" for the wives and mistresses of the Austro-Hungarian officers. The People's House, the property of our Party was not spared by these robbers and murderes. During the first days of the occupation, several articles were removed and many, especially books, destroyed. Only four months ago these gentlemen presumed to enter our People's House without any "by-your-leave" and to carry off everything that was left, without leaving any requisition tickets. Hereby our Party, which is poor, lost more than 50,000 dinars in Belgrade alone. We are by no means anxious to plead our own grievance in particular. We have merely quoted this instance as an illustration of the sad state of affairs in Serbia. From the fact that such attacks are permitted upon the property of a political organization, which, as everybody knows, maintains international relations and enjoys, so to say, international protection, one may easily conclude what sort of fate is reserved for the population which is protected by nobody.

Briefly, then, the economic losses sustained by Serbia during the war - before and especially during this disastrous occupation are so great that the restoration of the country cannot be considered anything but fictitious unless it is culminated by collective financial assistance organized on generous lines, over and above the reconstitution of its political independence. This financial assistance is the only means of retrieving the country from ruin and restoring it to its former standard of existence.

2. The Food Policy.

And what compensation does the Austro-Hungarian Military Government offer the Serbian population in order to make amends for all its sufferings? After requisitioning everything does it at least guarantee the people the minimum necessary to support life?

Not at all. On the contrary, everything is organized and calculated in such a way that the population is doomed to die of starvation. Serbia is by nature a rich country which can easily feed its population. But for the moment this country is split up into military and administrative districts which, as regards the exchange of foodstuffs are separated from each other by veritable Chinese walls. All exchange of foodstuffs between Military districts is strictly forbidden and it would be easier for

a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for an egg to pass from one district into another in Serbia. The District Commanders dispose of unlimited powers as regards the distribution of foodstuffs in their districts and in this respect they are responsible to no one, not even upon their own Government. The result is that the whole indispendable interchange of foodstuffs between the various parts of Serbia has become impossible and that the whole surplus produce of any one part of the country, which could and ought to be employed to supply the needs of some other region is immediately exported to Austria-Hungary. Thus the authorities have ended by creating an artificial shortage of foodstuffs which is then exported by the District Commanders themselves, by the Government officials and their civil agents, in the interests of the most shameless speculation. In this way certain officers and shady civilians grow richer from day to day while hundreds of thousands of Serbian women, children and old men lack the necessities of life and are in the grip of the most appalling famine. Austrian shops, or rather food cards are therefore the only remaining resource of the population; but only too often one fails to get even the quantity one is entitled to by the card. This system, too, has become a field for speculation. It is known for instance, that Austria-Hungary has never had any reason to complain of a salt shortage. Yet this has not kept the Serbian peasant from being left for months together without salt under the pretext that there was none. Although there was still plenty in the shops. And while the peasants were being refused salt, Austrian agents, soldiers and non-commissioned officers, were selling that same salt, ostensibly surreptitiously, at the rate of 8, 10 and 12 crowns per kilogramme. Any one who knows the importance of salt for agriculture and especially for stock-raising will readily understand why the peasants were ready to part with all their produce at ridiculous prices for the sake of obtaining a little salt.

As for the bread ration, it is the same in Belgrade as in Austria (e.g. not equal to the bread ration in Hungary). In spite of this for months together the population of Belgrade received under the name of "flour" merely a special mixture which could neither be made into bread nor cooked, nor eaten and which produced much sickness among the population. As regards the interior of Serbia, there are places where the bread ration is even more miserable. Thus, last spring, the unfortunate peasants of Baina Bashta received <u>only one kilogramme of maize per inhabitant during one whole month.</u> It may be imagined from this, what ration they will receive this Winter and next Spring.

STARVATION IN BELGRADE.

This food, (or rather starvation) policy, is most eloquently discernible in the faces of the inhabitants of Belgrade. In this town it is absolutely impossible to buy anything no matter what. It is only exceptionally and at fabulous prices that one can obtain a little fat, eggs, potatoes or beans. One can also get a little meat and that at prices which, compared to those ruling in Austria and Germany, are not even very high. But as the population almost throughout the country is absolutely deprived of the means of earning a livelihood, these prices are relatively high. In Belgrade you see hundreds of people waiting outside the shop which sells meat. But as the amount of this offal (feet, tripe, entrails, etc.) is very limited, it has become such a delicacy that people consider themselves lucky if they succeed in getting some once or twice a month. For the present population of 50,000, the municipality of Belgrade furnishes from 2,000 to 3,000 litres of milk during the summer season and only a few hundred litres in winter. Thus only persons who are seriously ill and quite young children receive a quarter of a litre of milk (half a pint) a day, and that only after many difficulties and most complicated procedure. Last spring - and spring is the best season for vegetables - the weekly allowance was only 157 grammes of vegetables for every inhabitant. One really fails to see how these people manage to keep alive. Thousands of women, children and old men roam desperately day and night along the high roads and through the surrounding, sometimes very distant villages, in order to procure a little food. Meantime these expeditions are severely forbidden. You can buy nothing in the villages, neither monopolized produce, nor anything else. An order has been published in Belgrade whereby every woman caught in the act of buying food is sentenced not only to arrest but to be beaten with a stick. The food prices fixed by the authorities are such that no peasant will furnish provisions at that price. That is precisely what is wanted by the men in power. It is <u>they</u> who go to the villages and buy up all the provisions at the fixed prices and export them to Austria. Their policy as regards food prices, instead of helping both consumer and producer, is directed <u>against</u> both and pursues only the sole object of robbing and ruining the country, and that is why Belgrade, the centre of a rich agricultural country, there is greater distress and famine than in Vienna.

The desperate plight of the population of Belgrade determined Dr. Veljkovitch, Mayor of Belgrade, Mr. Peritch, Professor at the University and several others to submit a

memorandum to Colonel Kerschnawi, Chief of Staff of the Military Government. The requests embodied in this memorandum were very modest. The petitioners requested in the first place the simplification of the extremely lengthy and complicated procedure which the inhabitants of Belgrade have to go through in order to obtain permission to travel into the interior and that this permission should not only be granted to a few privileged speculators, but to all who stood in need of procuring a few provisions. The Government was further begged to modify the policy of maximum prices. And finally the petitioners requested that the municipality of Belgrade should itself be permitted to purchase the fixed quantity of cattle to be slaughtered in order to prevent the military Intendance from speculating in this article of food. The intendants sometimes supplied the municipality with animals the entrails of which weighed 43 kg. while the whole of the meat weighed 37 kg. This memorandum, however, struck the authorities as being an exceedingly suspicious document. First, Mayor Veljkovitch was summoned to the police station where he was officially questioned as to his real intentions. Then followed, after a long interval, an interview with Colonel Kerschnawi which was extremely brief and frigid. As a matter of fact, it was only Colonel Kerschnawi who spoke. He declared that the Memorandum was not correct in its statements, that the population did not suffer from a shortage of food, that e.g. his wife bought all her provisions in Belgrade, without any difficulty and very cheaply and he wound up by saying these matters did not concern the Municipality, but the Military Government. Upon this statement the interview came to an end.

In order duly to appreciate these incidents we must not forget that Mayor Veljkovitch is an ex-Minister and chief of a party which is in opposition to Mr. Pashitch (Prime Minister of Serbia) and not at all hostile to Austria-Hungary, while Mr. Peritch is a convinced Austrophil and generally known as such. In spite of this they were both of them and especially Dr. Veljkovitch, so badly used that the latter found himself obliged to tender his resignation. It goes without saying that the authorities stand even less on ceremony with the Socialist rabble. One of our comrades, Town Councillor Mika Spassoyevitch, presumed last year in very moderate terms to criticise this policy of starvation and to demand bread for the people. Although over 70 years of age, he was at once arrested and interned in Hungary.

This intolerable situation is further aggravated by the amazing callousness shown by the authorities and the Austro-Hungarian banks. As Serbia is today deprived of all economic life, everybody in the country lives wholly upon what relief reaches him from abroad. People live upon what they receive from Switzerland and France, from their relations or friends, or from charitable missions. Now in this latter respect, Serbia has been overlooked by all the world. Twice only, in 1916, did missions - one American and one Swiss - come to distribute food and clothing among the population of Belgrade. The money received from relations in Switzerland and France is therefore the one vital resource of the Serbian population. The sums which the fathers of families have hitherto been able to send are very insignificant in comparison to the needs of the population. Collectively, they only amounted to about twenty million (francs) in two years! Nevertheless, this sum represents a very great deal for many families, all the more as they receive no other help. In the meantime the Austro-Hungarian banks and authorities are so cruel and so devoid of all conscience that they do not hesitate to delay the payment of these sums for months together. There have been cases in which sums despatched from Switzerland or France in September, 1916 were not paid out in Belgrade before March or April, 1917 - after six months of speculation. It is really superflous to explain once more that the position of the population of Belgrade will be terrible this winter and next spring, if these poor people are compelled to live without money.

So far they have, at any rate, managed to exist, or rather to vegetate, painfully, with terrible suffering and a vast physiological deficit, the dangerous consequences of which will not make themselves felt until after the war. But for this winter and next spring, the population will be even more cruelly tried, because the Military Government succeeded in organizing a perfect system for seizing this year's harvest (1917) to the last grain from the Serbian population. All, for positively all is at this moment exported, so that there is nothing left for the native population but to fold its hands and die of starvation.

Help, as prompt and extensive as possible is urgently needed if this people for all that it is endowed with great vitality is not to be doomed to die of starvation, under most terrible conditions.

5. THE POLITICAL SITUATION.

Logically enough, the economic misery of occupied Serbia is completed by political slavery.

Of course any kind of public right is out of the question. No form of collective life is possible in Serbia at the moment. All organizations, including professional, cooperative and even charitable associations are prohibited. Anyone daring to try to form any kind of association would be immediately interned, and perhaps subjected to an even more terrible fate. Immediately upon his arrival, the first Military Governor of Serbia published an order rigorously prohibiting all politics in the country. It is not difficult to imagine what a reactionary and military government would understand under the term of "politics". There is only one printing office in Belgrade today, the one which is run by the Military Governor General and publishes the "Beogradske Novine" (Belgrade News). All private printing offices have been closed often having been looted. Neither machinery, nor any other material is left: it is even forbidden to print menus. A printing press - according to the expression of the local authorities - is equal to an enemy arsenal. If a Serb citizen were to be so bold as to solicit permission to edit a paper, he would at once be entered in the blacklist of the Government. It is forbidden to make use of the Serbian alphabet in public traffic, including the post. Needless to add, all political activity is prohibited, as it is even dangerous to say openly what one thinks and even to have independent thoughts. Quite harmless humdrum citizens, ignorant peasants and even gossiping women run the risk - if their harmless and naive conversation is overheard and reported by spies - of being sent off to internment camps, to prison, or even the gallows.

TERRORISM IN SERBIA.

The most elementary rights of man, are not guaranteed in Serbia. In the villages, the gendarmes wield unlimited power and lord it over everybody. Their methods of procedure are an admirable reflection of the system applied by the Austro-Hungarian administration to the subject nationalities. Espionage, denunciations, exactions of all kinds, theft and sometimes even murder, are typical of the behavior of the gendarmerie in the villages. In the towns these privileges are enjoyed by the army officers and non-commissioned officers. In many towns official notices are posted up directing that the whole native population men,

women, children and old men must uncover their heads and make a low curtsey before each officer. Sometimes you see officers using their horse whips upon rebels who fail to comply at once with these orders. Indeed cudgellings have become a means of education in which the Austro-Hungarian civilizators take a special delight. This penalty is applied on every occasion and under the most absurd pretexts. Two Belgrade college students who had been compelled by want to become tram conductors, were each sentenced to receive 75 blows with a stick for having failed to salute a subaltern. The poor lads fainted three times and each time the beating was recommenced. After they had been subjected to this shameful punishment they were kept in prison for a month and then interned in Hungary. In the prefecture of Police in Belgrade, a certain Lieutenant Wiedmann enjoys unlimited power over the lives and liberties of all the inhabitants. It depends only upon his tyranny whether any given inhabitant of Belgrade is arrested, cuffed, beaten with a stick, and above all, interned, which, as we shall presently show, is indirectly sentence of death. All Belgrade has - and that often in the literal sense of the word - passed through the hands of this gendarme, from ex-Ministers to the humblest day-laborer. There is scarcely a person in Belgrade who has not had cause to complain of having been maltreated, insulted and outraged in his most sacred feelings by this Austrian Gessler who behaves thus without any plausible pretext and without any offence on the part of those whom he persecutes. Serbia knows no personage more hateful than this tyrant - which circumstance has not prevented him from retaining his post ever since the beginning of the occupation. It is, therefore, not a case of an exception or an accidental mistake, but on the contrary, this burlesque individual personifies an entire system. This fashion of maltreation, the Serbian citizens, of reducing them to the level of mere cattle, to enslave them as completely as possible and to let them constantly feel their degradation, constitutes the very essence of the Austro-Hungarian occupation in Serbia. The name of Lieutenant Wiedmann will dwell in the memories of future generations as the symbol incarnate of Austro-Hungarian "Kulturtraegerei" in Serbia.

The courts exist not to prevent all this robbing and tyranny, but to increase them. Not one Austro-Hungarian officer accused of theft, exaction, outrage or murder, has ever been convicted, although these crimes are of daily occurrence. It is even dangerous to lodge a complaint against an officer or an official. Anyone endeavoring to defend his property, his honour, or his life, even in the most harmless way, is at once arrested, beaten, interned.

It would be easy to quote countless instances of such excesses. The arrests of perfectly innocent citizens and their being sentenced to incarceration and even death is one of the most ordinary occurrences. The most important auxiliaries of the courts, and indeed of the whole administration in general, are secret agents, detectives and spies, recruited from the least commendable and most depraved of the Austro-Hungarian and Serbian populations. It is upon their depositions and reports that the property, liberty, honour and life of every Serbian citizen are wholly dependent. The courts only exist in order to lend a pseudo-legal sanction to the decisions of these creatures, who from a privileged class in Austria-Hungary and enjoy great social consideration. The most trivial denunciation can cast a man into prison, and death sentences are pronounced by the court with truly criminal unconcern. Thus 35 peasants, besides the schoolmasters, Glishitch were shot or hanged and 250 men and women were sentenced to incarceration this year in the village of Ramatya (in the district of Gruzha), merely because some old and disused arms and old fowling pieces had been found in the village. As for individual death sentences pronounced by the courts or even by the gendarmes and carried out on the spot, they are quite ordinary occurrences. Many absolutely guiltless hostages have been done to death in this way. One is even tempted to think that these gentlemen take a special pleasure in the carrying out of these death penalties. In many towns the men are hanged and on one occasion this was even done with a pregnant woman - with much ceremony in the market place, where the bodies are sometimes left hanging for several days. And this they call educating a savage people! When the Serbian people will have risen to the enviable ethic and aesthetic heights of the Austro-Hungarian officers and begin to take pleasure in these compalistic exhibitions and patronize them, the former will presumably have become capable of understanding the lofty culture of the latter.

4. INTERNMENT CAMPS.

The greatest crime committed by the Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian Governments of occupation is the internment of perfectly inoffensive and peaceful citizens and their wholesale internment. All we have so far drawn attention to, was only massacre in detail. As regards the internments, they are nothing but wholesale massacre. Merely from the region occupied by Austria-Hungary, more than 150,000 Serbian subjects have been interned, including several thousands of old men of over 60 years of age, several thousand women and even children from 8 to 15 years! In giving this truly ap-

palling figure, we are not taking into consideration the 150,000 Serbian soldiers, prisoners of war who share the fate of their interned brothers in Austria and Hungary.

We should require a whole book with appalling illustrations if we wanted to depict the position and existence of these martyrs. We must abstain from doing so for the moment. We will confine ourselves to the following statement. The fact of being interned in Austria-Hungary or in Bulgaria really amounts to being indirectly sentenced to death. About thirty per cent of these poor wretches have died up to the present. The rest are dragging out a miserable existence amid infinite hardships and unspeakable suffering while waiting for inevitable death. In many concentration camps containing on an average several thousand interned persons, ten, twenty, and thirty deaths a day are the rule. But in some cases especially in Hungary there have been as many as 200 and 300 deaths a day. There are concentration camps where one-half of the inmates have already died. This is not owing to some epidemic which claims innumerable victims. They die of hunger and cold. There you may observe in truly typical and only too frequent cases, how a perfectly sound organism is gradually reduced to die by hunger. During the first state the organism, although having daily to submit to a huge deficit in nutrition, still lives upon its former reserves. Then comes the second stage, that of a sensation of atrocious animal irresistible hunger. The wretched sufferers devour the grass they find along the hedges, although this kind of food is strictly forbidden. They spend whole days in turning over refuse heaps and eat everything more or less resembling food. Their guards are powerless to restrain them, even with the bayonet. This state is followed by the third and last, the period of exhaustion and apathy. The sufferer becomes completely indifferent. The best food no longer tempts him in this state of prostration and he no longer cares for life. Fully conscious, calm and impassible he waits for the approach of his last hour. When he feels it coming he lies down, covers himself up and dies without uttering a word. Those around him watch him with equal indifference, well knowing that their own fate will be the same as that of their comrade, and that it will overtake them ere long. In countless cases the autopsy has revealed the fact that the organism was in ideal health, but that there was not one grain of fat in the whole body.

Even those who still survive must be looked upon as half-dead already. These poor wretches are doomed to die within a year or two after the war. Only a very small number endowed with exceptionally vigorous constitutions will

be able to go on living and working after the war. The horrible fate of those interned is well known to everybody in Serbia, even to the very children. And so every man sentenced to internment upon the denunciation of some spy, is followed by his distracted family, weeping and wailing as one does in following the dead. It is, therefore, not in the least surprising or incomprehensible that people are terrified at the prospect of being interned. But, when, last year, a certain number of peasants from the district of Gruzha, who were sentenced to internment by the military authorities, presumed to hide and failed to respond to the first summons of the authorities, all these poor people, about forty in number, were summarily shot without further formality. Their houses were burnt down, all their property destroyed and their families were interned.

We know very well that the civil population of Austria as well as her army, suffers likewise from lack of food and that it is not possible to give to the interned Serbs what others have to go short of. But this does not explain gratuitous cruelty. Thus, e.g. the money which the interned Serbs receive from their relations, either from home, or from France or Switzerland, is speculated upon in a truly criminal fashion in the concentration camps. There is a rule, in accordance with which, regardless of the amount of the sum sent, only a very small proportion of it, from 20 to 50 crowns a month, is paid over to the interned recipient. The rest of the money is left at the disposal of the officers and officials to employ in all manner of speculations. Now the inmate of an internment camp requires at least a few hundred crowns a month in order to supplement the wretched food he receives in the camp with such food as he can obtain at exorbitant prices through intermediary agents from the neighboring villages. For these interned people, money means neither more now nor less than life. And so, by depriving these people of the money due to them, the concentration camp authorities deprive them in fact of their lives. This oriminal playing with human life constitutes an essential part of the policy of every conqueror. Thus several Austro-Hungarian doctors attached to these camps declined to see more than ten patients a day at a time when the death rate in the camps was from 20 to 30 a day.

But the most important point of all is that these poor people ought not to be interned at all. There is no kind of military necessity for it. During the occupation by the enemy armies, for a whole year and half there was not a shadow of trouble, not an attempt at revolt in the whole country. This fact need not be construed as a compliment to the Government of occupation or as a proof of the existence of enviable conditions in Serbia. It simply proves that the Serbian people is so exhausted with suffering that it can only think of rest. In spite of this the Austrian

Military Government has without any plausible reason interned more than 150,000 inoffensive Serbs including thousands of children, women and old men over sixty years of age. By these internments, the families of the poor wretches and likewise the whole of the country which was thereby deprived of its last reserves of labour, were doomed to starve. And it was only after all these internments and other cruel provocations, as the consequence of ill-treatment and not as a preliminary act which might have justified it, that the revolt in Southern Serbia ensued in March, 1917.

What is the true reason for these internments without number. They are partly explained by the stupidity of the Austro-Hungarian administration which one sees in every Serbian child a person guilty of high treason and a bomb-thrower. On the other hand it is an outcome of that criminal disregard of human life which is peculiar to soldiers, and especially to conquerors. Merely Lieutenant Wiedmann, whose name has been mentioned before, has the loss of several thousand human lives, at least, on his conscience. This official will cause a Serb to be interned and simply because the latter has failed to reply immediately to his question or because he has presumed to exhibit fear during his cross examination. This is sufficient for him to do a man to death with all his family. In short, the whole method of the Austrian Administration is directed by the inexorable purpose of exterminating the last remnants of the Serbian population.

We protest emphatically against this criminal policy of Austria-Hungary. We demand that an end be put to these massacres of thousands of guiltless Serbian citizens! We appeal to the entire civilized world, to raise its voice against these unheard-of crimes and to demand of the Austro-Hungarian Government that our countrymen be set at liberty and sent back to their homes. If this liberation is not brought about very speedily indeed, before the winter sets in with its rigours, all these people are doomed to die within the next few months.

B. THE REGION OCCUPIED BY BULGARIA.

Before the beginning to depict the situation in the Bulgarian part of Serbia, we feel bound to draw attention to one very important fact which ought to gratify all Socialists in general and Balkan Socialists in particular, namely, that one ought to draw a sharp distinction between the ruling classes of Bulgaria and the Bulgarian people. One of the Signatories of this Memorandum has had the opportunity during the earlier months of the occupation of acquiring personal knowledge of both administrations, the Bulgarian and the Austro-Hungarian. The Bulgarian common soldier, i.e.

the Bulgarian people under arms has everywhere, wherever he has come in contact with it, produced a good impression upon all the Serbian population. During the early days of the invasion, when every soldier possessed, so to say, power of life and death over the vanquished population, when his discretionary powers were unlimited and his responsibility almost nil, while there was as yet no judicial order in those regions, conditions were far better in the territory conjured by the Bulgarian army. There was far more liberty and order than later on when the Government of occupation had established itself there and "official" order was introduced by the ruling classes. During this first period cases of murder, outrage and looting were unknown and none made a pastime of ill-using the population. The situation in the eastern part of Serbia (which was occupied by the Bulgars), was at that time better and less intolerable than that in the West which was occupied by the Germans and Austrians. The Bulgarian common soldier felt sympathetic towards the Serbs to whom he was attracted by the kinship of race which unites them, and he fully appreciated the horrible tragedy of our position. It often happened that these sons of the Bulgarian people wept in our presence over the ruin of Serbia and were profoundly unhappy to see Bulgaria and Serbia dragged once more for the third time, into a fratricidal war. Some of them even prophesied a dark and disastrous future for Bulgaria for having consented to foment discord between the Balkan peoples. It would be false to pretend that none but Socialists spoke in this way because among the Bulgarian soldiers who expressed such opinions, there were both ignorant peasants and humble townspeople devoid of all political education. It is only natural, moreover, that this altogether instinctive sentiment of solidarity should be so highly developed among the Balkan peoples, since they were all equally under the Turkish yoke, the slavery of which they endured for centuries. More especially this sentiment is bound to persist between the Serbs and the Bulgars who are really only one people, speaking different dialects of one and the same language.

But a change came over the situation with the arrival of the masters of Sofia and the official policy dictated by the reactionary gang of brigands commanded by Radoslavoff. These people who have terrorized their own countrymen for decades, were little inclined to show consideration to the completely vanquished population of an occupied region. By an incredible system of outrage and a policy of methodical extermination of the Serbs these criminals seek to prepare the ground for a Bulgarian hegemony in the Balkans and the establishment of a Bulgarian Empire under the sceptre of the Coburgs. The crimes committed against the Serbian people by these individuals are without number and our report would grow far too long, were we to describe in detail

the situation in the Serbian territory occupied by Bulgaria, as we have done with regard to the territory governed by Austria-Hungary. All that has been said already about the Austro-Hungary administration is equally true of the Bulgarian with this difference, that what has been said about Austria-Hungary must be multiplied by itself, as it were, in order to be applicable to the Bulgarian administration.

Bad as they are, courts at least exist in the Austro-Hungarian part. There is at least some attempt, from time to time, to clothe the despotism of the authorities in some sort of legal form. Sometimes, and were it only in appearance, public opinion is considered. One feels, and were it ever so slightly, restrained by vague forms of international law and morality.

All this ceases completely as soon as you enter the domain of the Bulgarian administration. Cross the Morava river and you find yourself in Asia. The ruling classes of Bulgaria have proved that if they are not very good allies of the Turks they are at least their very apt pupils. The Bulgarian part of Serbia knows nothing of courts. Only quite recently has a court been established in Nish, which has to do duty for the whole of the occupied territory of Serbia. It is the police, recruited from the very dregs of the populace, which is invested with unlimited powers. The personal liberty of every Serb citizen, no less than his life, depends wholly and solely upon the arbitrary pleasure of every Bulgarian police agent or gendarme. Beatings inflicted upon men, women, children and old men are even more common than within Austro-Hungarian territory. Old men of over 60 years of age - and that not only in the country but also in the towns - receive seventy-five blows with a stick for failing to salute a gendarme. A woman, who has a Bulgarian officer living in her house, and it goes without saying that he does not pay his landlady anything - is sentenced to twenty-five blows with a stick if the officer fancies that the tablecloth which is laid in his room is not less fine that that of the mistress of the house. A Serbian judge living in Chupria, a man of superior education, is compelled every day to saw wood for the schoolmistresses who lodge gratis in his house in order to avoid being beaten. In these regions the Serbs are reduced to a veritable state of slavery such as that of which they were subjected two centuries ago under the Turks.

In the Austro-Hungarian region there is at least a semblance of public order. As for the region occupied by the Bulgars, the most elementary guarantee for public safety is conspicuous by its absence. Always under threat of the penalty of death, the Bulgarian authorities resort to exactions and contributions to such an extent that many Serbs have been obliged to fly to the other side of the Morava into the Austrian domain. Numerous bands of brigands, tolerated by the

authorities, roam about the country plundering and murdering as they go. Not infrequently these bandits are even secretly in league with the Bulgarian Officers, police agents and gendarmes. Such are the authorities which rule today in occupied Serbia. This is how they promote the happiness of Macedonia and "liberated Eastern Serbia."

The limits of our report do not permit us to depict all these abuses in detail. For this reason we will confine ourselves to drawing attention to several special features of the Bulgarian Government of Occupation which are so unique in character that they are without parallel even in the Austro-Hungarian domain.

1. POLICY OF DENATIONALIZATION.

The Austro-Hungarian Administration was by no means innocent of a certain tendency to modify the national culture of the Serbs, and of aspiring to "Croaticize" and "Magyarize" the school youth. It also attempted a clerical propaganda among the population, which it desired to see imbued with this spirit. But it achieved very poor results in this direction. The attempt to make the Serbian population into a priest-ridden community was foredoomed to failure from the outset, because from a religious point of view, the Serbs are decidedly emancipated. The Church, as a political and social institution, possesses no importance and no power with us. The clergy only exercise a very slight influence in politics. With us it is not the priests who draw the populace after them. On the contrary, it is the masses who exert their influence upon the clergy. Only such priests as have devoted themselves energetically to the cause of democracy, have succeeded in playing a leading part in our country.

But all that has been done in this respect in the Austro-Hungarian doman, cannot be compared with the policy of denationalization as pursued by the Bulgars. The Bulgarian ruling classes deny on principle, the existence of the Serbian race throughout the whole of the territory they have conquered, although it is precisely this region which furnished our land with its greatest national heroes who fought one hundred years ago in the Serbian Insurrection against the Turks, for Serbia's liberty and independence and died for it (Stevan Sindjelitch, from Nish District,, and Hajduk Veljko, from Negotin, etc.). But whoever would today in this occupied region declare himself a member of the Serb nation and insist upon this description, would immediately be arraigned for high treason and would have signed his own death-warrant. All Serbian writings, not only the books in the public libraries, but even those found in private dwellings, are being requisitioned and burnt. It is expressly forbidden, even in private intercourse, to write Serbian.

Even the official paper of the allied domain, the organ of the Austro-Hungarian Millitary Government, is severely prohibited throughout the territory occupied by the Bulgars, solely because it is published in Croatian, i.e. in Serbian, since "Croat" and "Serb" are only two different designations for the same language and the same people. It is likewise forbidden to bear Serbian names. One of the signatories of this memorandum, Popovitch, could only obtain a passport in Chupria (a town situated in the region occupied by the Bulgars) under the name of "Popoff", i.e. as a Bulgar. Newborn infants are only given Bulgar baptismal names by the Bulgarian priests, so that the faithful will have to have them re-named after the war. Only Bulgarian is taught in the primary schools and instruction is given solely by Bulgarian schoolmasters and mistresses. It is the same in ecclesiastical matters. All scholastic and ecclesiastical appointments and all offices in municipal administration are filled by Bulgars. Throughout the entire territory occupied by the Bulgars you will not find even one Serbian teacher or priest. All have been interned or even murdered except those who were compelled under the threat of death to sign statements declaring that they are Bulgars and that the districts occupied by the Bulgars are all Bulgarian lands. The other Serbian officials have been similarly dealt with, excepting only a very few. In proof of this, we can only quote a few cases which impressed themselves particularly upon our memories. For readily comprenensible reasons we were unable to carry away systematically compiled material and written evidence from our country. Here are the cases in question:

(1) In the town of Vranja there were killed, Aksentie Mishitch, priest and George Antitch, a former member of the Serbian Parliament for that town.

(2)One night, in November 1915, the Arch-priest Stevan Komnenovitch, the priests Michailo Igniatovitch, Yosif Popovitch, Trandafil Kotsitch, Svetolik Antonievitch and the schoolmaster Marko Yokovitch were led away from the town of Leskovatz, with their hands pinioned. Two years passed without any of these men having given a sign of life to his family as is usually done by interned persons. But eventually the peasants discovered, not far from the mouth of the Morava, several corpses, long-haired and with long beards, and showing signs of a violent death. (The orthodox priests of the East wear their hair and beards long in conformity with their order). There can be no doubt but that these were the bodies of these unfortunate men, who had been foully done to death.

(3) One night the Bulgarian authorities carried away the priest Onufrie Popovitch from Vlasotintsi. Some time afterwards the priest's head, hidden under a heap of stones, was discovered by his family.

(4) In the village of Prekoptchelitza, the Bulgarian authorities began by looting the house of a priest, Petar Tsvetkovitch, in order to rob him of 5,000 dinars in gold, and in the end they murdered him.

(5) On November 9th, 1915, the Bulgarian authorities carried away 24 Serbian priests from the town of Nish, including Luka Marianovitch, Yovan K. Popovitch, Yanko Yankovitch, Dobrosav Markovitch and Koyitch. Not a sign of life from these men has ever reached their families.

(6) On November 19th, 1915, a second batch of priests was carried away from Nish, including Tsvetko Bogdanovitch, George Yankovitch and Milan Tsvetkovitch. It is not known to this day what has become of them or rather, one knows it only too well.

(7) On November 14th, 1915, the Bulgars deported from Nish a retired official, Vessa Milovanovitch, brotner of the late Minister for Foreign Affairs and Serbian Prime Minister Dr. Milovan Milovanovitch. His wife in despair finally approached the Bulgarian general Ratcho Petroff, a former personal friend of Dr. Milovanovitch. General Petroff replied by sending her the following official report: "The name of Vessa Milovanovitch is not on the list of interned persons."

(8) Three priests, George Petrovitch, Sima Yovanovitch and Vladimir Rashitch were taken away from the town of Zayetchar. They were all three murdered on the road to Vidin, and their bodies thrown into a ditch, where they were devoured by the village dogs. The peasants found nothing left of the bodies, to bury them, but the bones.

(9) The priest Pavle Yovanovitch, of the village of Veliko Yasikovo, was killed in the same manner. His wife subsequently found the body and had it buried.

(10) In March, 1917, four citizens of the town of Prokuplie and a priest Radivoye Vuchinitch, were killed in the open street by the Bulgars.

(11) The priest Trayko, of the village of Turekovatz, was taken away and nothing has been heard of him since. His daughter who was accused of being secretly in league with the Serbian comitadjis, was hanged. But before being hanged, she was subjected to atrocious tortures by being flogged with a strand of barbed wire. The young girl's sister, wife of the book-seller I. Obrenovitch of Leskovatz, was so cruelly beaten, that not only were all her teeth knocked out, but she went mad within two days of the exxcution. She died shortly afterwards. Their brother Vassa, a priest, was likewise taken away and mur-

dered together with his son, a lad of 16. And all these victims were made in one family alone!

2. DEPORTATION AND EXTERMINATION OF THE SERBIAN POPULATION.

A very large number of Serbs whom it was not possible to kill in Serbia have been deported to Asia Minor. Whole families from Eastern Serbia, women, children and old men were dragged by force from their homes and carried off to Asia Minor. And this is not intended for personal and individual punishment. It is a system, corresponding to a definite policy. All elements capable of offering any effective national resistance are first to be eliminated from that part of Serbia, and then the rest of the population is to be Bulgarized. It goes without saying that the Bulgars have here set themselves an unrealizable aim, as from this point of view Eastern Serbia does not in the least resemble Macedonia. The Slav population of Macedonia easily becomes either Serbian or Bulgarian. But as for Eastern Serbia, its national and ethical physiognomy is far too pronounced to permit of the country becoming denationalized. To try to Bulgarize that part of Serbia is as stupid as would be an attempt on the part of our Government to Serbicize the town of Sofia and the neighboring country bordering on Serbia.

These methods of denationalization, which the Bulgars have copied from the Turks, can only result in the barbarous extermination of the harmless and unprotected Serbian population. Those countless Serbian families which have been deported to Asia Minor, are all doomed to perish. These deportations are in fact nothing but wholesale executions of Serbs, similar to the massacres of the Armenians organized by Sultan Abdul Hamid and the Young Turks.

The revolt which broke out in March 1917 in Southern Serbia, more especially in Bulgarian territory, furnished the Bulgarian authorities with a splendid opportunity of displaying all the bestial cruelty by which they are inspired. It is difficult to say with certainty how it was possible for this revolt to take place. But what is beyond all doubt is that the Serbian civil population had practically no hand in it. The whole insurrection was planned and carried out by Serbian soldiers and comitadjis who had succeeded in invading the authorities. These conspirators were very probably supported by Bulgarian and Austro-Hungarian deserters discontented with their fate. Nevertheless it was the innocent population which was made to answer for the whole business. As the Serbian population had been disarmed by the authorities since the very beginning of the occupation, it was not in a condition

to oppose the insurgents or to resist them. It was willy-nilly compelled to provide them with food and lodging and to assist them in other ways. It goes without saying that these acts were interpreted by the Bulgarian and the Austro-Hungarian authorities as a direct participation in the revolt and that these unfortunate people were put to death for them. And when they sought to defend themselves before the Authorities, pleading that it had been physically impossible for them to resist the insurgents, they almost invariably received this incredibly cynical reply: "It was your duty to resits all demands on the part of these men and to let yourselves be killed, if need be. But since you would not be killed by them, we are going to do it instead."

About 20,000 Serbs were killed under this pretext, of whom 3,000 at the outside had taken part in the rebellion. All the rest belonged to the innocent civil population. Neither women nor children were spared. The wife of Gaya Nikolitch, a former member of Parliament, was shot after having been kept under arrest for a week without food or water, for having started a hospital in Lebane during the revolt for the purpose of tending the victims of the insurrection. Thousands of women and children were interned and others thrown into prison. Thirty-six villages near Leskovatz were completely depopulated. Families without number were left without house or home. Almost the entire male population of Nish, some 4,000 men was deported. One batch was sent by train to Pirot. The rest had to go on foot - and have never come back..... One police official in the neighborhood of Nish boasted in company of having with his own hands alone killed about 300 Serbs. "It was rather awkward at first", explained this meritorious individual, "it always took several slashes with the knife; but when I got into the way of it a bit, the job was quite easy. One thrust, and the man was dead." It is very likely that in his zeal this Bulgar should have somewhat exaggerated the facts. It is, however, none the less true that this incident is extremely characteristic of the mentality of the Bulgars in occupation.

The cruelty of the Bulgarian authorities is so great and so revolting that it sometimes ends by rousing the indignation of the German soldiers garrisoned there, and the latter even try to protect the Serbian civilians who are being maltreated by their allies. In mixed garrisons, relations are very strained between Germans and Bulgars. Thus, e.g. the Town of Nish is divided by the main street into two sharply distinct zones. A German soldier cannot enter the Bulgarian zone except by special permission and only strictly on business. The same applies to the Bulgarian soldiers with regard to the German zone.

Truly the barbarity of the Bulgarian ruling powers exceeds all limits.

CONCLUSION.

Our object in drawing up this memorandum was to reveal to the whole world what crimes are being committed by the Bulgarian and Austro-Hungarian ruling powers against the Serbs, and to brand them as they deserve. But we do not think for one moment of confounding the people with their rulers. We do not in the least want to preach vengeance against the people of Bulgaria or against the peoples of the Austro-Hungarian Mornarchy. The common soldiers, whether Austro-Hungarian, Bulgarian or German, have almost shown sympathy and pity for the Serbian people in the horrible crisis it is undergoing at present. Peoples can never go on hating each other very deeply for any length of time. At the worst, they can only be misled and blinded for a moment by chauvinists and the men in power. During the earlier months of the occupation the German soldiers often shared their food with the Serbian women and children, even as we saw Serbian women sharing their poor bread ration with the famished Austro-Hungarian soldiers who go from house to house begging for the food. This is the most touching display of the spontaneous solidarity of the great international class of those who are oppressed and exploited, and deprived of their rights. Those who are not divided into invaded and invaders and whose misery is equally great in both camps.

OUR MEMORANDUM PURSUES THE FOLLOWING AIMS:

(1) We want to urge the Russo-Hollando Scandinavian Committee to develop an energetic activity in favor of protecting the Serbian population which has hitherto been protected by nobody and forgotten by all the world. In the first place we would call upon it to work upon the Socialists of the Central Empires so that they may fight the policy of their Governments in occupied Serbia.

(2) We want especially to urge the Social Democrats of Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria to develop a more energetic activity both in and out of Parliament in order to help to save the last remnants of the Serbian population in the occupied regions. Their first duty should be to demand immediately from their Governments that all interned Serbs be sent back to their homes. They must demand

this release not only for the interned civilians but also for the prisoners of war who have on the whole, with very few exceptions been separated from their families ever since the first Balkan War, for five years, in fact. There is really no military necessity for keeping these poor people in camps. They have all been disarmed and even on their return to Serbia they would still find themselves in territory occupied by Austro-Hungarians and Bulgars, and under the unlimited power of those in occupation.

(3) We want to draw the attention of the civilized world to the terrible distress which prevails at this moment in Serbia, so that speedy assistance both in money and in food, may be forthcoming for this people that has been left so far to its fate. Except for the two visits referred to, one from the American Mission and one from the Swiss, who came last year to distribute a little food and clothing among the population of Belgrade, Serbia has so far received nothing from Europe, and especially from our Allies, except verbal encouragement.

(4) We want the Serbian Government, as well as the other Entente Governments to display greater interest in the Serbian population which is really not in a state, under present conditions to endure, unaided, the last phase of the war.

(5) And we desire to show by this Memorandum that the vital need of the Serbian people is not a prolongation of the war, but the speedy conclusion of peace. This is the only condition under which the final ruin of the Serbian people can be prevented, and the proletariats of the whole world succeed in placing their respective Governments in the dock for the crimes which, as the last Congress of the Social Democrat Party in Vienna so truly expressed it, are not only acts of tyranny against the conquered peoples but also an offense against the peoples in the names of whom they have been committed.

Stockholm, November, 1917.

For the Serbian Social Democracy,

DUSHAN POPOVITCH, Secretary of the Party.

T. KATZLEROVITCH, Member of the Serbian Parliament.

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GERMAN ATROCITIES IN SERBIA.

A cynical avowal by a German writer.

(Translated from "Die Schaubuehne" January 4, 1917.)

"Die Schaubuehne" a monthly political, artistic and economic review, published in Germany, printed in its number of January 4, 1917, above the signature of Oskar Maurus Fontana, a German writer and a reserve officer in the German Army, who accompanied the German troops to Serbia, the following account of that military expedition. It requires no comment.

"On the field of battle, military condemnations are pronounced in very summary fashion. There is almost no preliminary investigation, neither prosecutor nor defender are present. The prisoners face their judges alone and await the verdict, which can only be liberty or death. There is no penal servitude, no confinement in chains, the sentence is pronounced in the open air and by a judge who usually commands a regiment. A shell may, in an hour's time, transform him into a mass of crushed flesh and bones, so the fate of the accused man is of no importance whatever in this lost corner of territory, where the houses seem to sleep, surrounded by haystacks which look as if they had existed for centuries. No one utters a word for or against him. In two minutes the accused is forgotten, be he still in life and smiling, or lying stretched on the ground, his limbs stiff in death. He is trampled upon and crushed like some troublesome insect. It does not last long, his fate interests no one. His mother, his children, his father, his brothers, his peasant-farm, all that is gone, before one has time to think of it, even before the condemned man realizes it himself.

"One morning, I saw a young peasant; a captain was pushing him gently before him as if he were merely going with him to requisition a haystack. In this scene there was, however, something which gripped one. There was a look in this young man's eyes, such as I have never seen and such as made me ask 'What is it all about?' The captain and the young peasant disappeared. A few seconds later I heard rifle fire. I made inquiries and was told 'a young comitadjis, who was captured here during a surprise attack, has just been shot'. It was the young man I had just seen and then I understood what the indescribable look in his eyes was; it was death I had read there.

"Some days later, during a march, we came to a house which was on fire. It was a signal. Shrapnel rained on us.

The soldiers put out the fire, and brought along three women and an old man, whom they had found near the fire. They are accused of having set the house on fire. They reply 'No.' They are ordered to confess. They reply: 'We did nothing. It is our house which is burning; the others set it on fire'. They are them asked: 'How many Serbian troops passed here?' They reply: 'We do not know': The major says 'Shoot them'.

"The troops halt. We look on, breathless, at the drama; We are so young to make war. No one tells these women in their own native tongue what is going to be done to them. But they have understood, they lower their eyes like an animal that awaits the fatal stroke. They do not protest. A momentary shudder passes over their bodies. They can not believe it, they do not understand, their glances right and left seek salvation, some miracle. They march slowly with dragging feet. Before their condemnation they had looked fixedly at some of us, a mute regard without tears, so piercing, that we are forced to lower our eyes. Then we hear the crackling of the rifles.

"Half an hour later soldiers returning from a reconnaissance brought in an old peasant and his son, a youth of seventeen. They had fired once, somewhere, on the Austrians, at least they are accused of having done so. They reply with a haughty air: 'No.' And they persist in their denial. They are asked: 'What do you know of the Serbs? How many have passed this way?' They reply: 'We know nothing, we have seen no one'. The major orders: 'Shoot them!'.

"The father, who had been standing with lowered head, on hearing the order, turns his eyes toward his son, who is on the left. The son makes the same movement towards the father. Their eyes meet and they take farewell of one another; a tear for a moment glistens on the pupils which are dilated till they seem to fill their whole eyes. The look of the son becomes more energetic: 'I can not die', he cries,'I am only seventeen years old. I have fifty years to live, I will flee, I will flee'. The father prays, begs and implores and again regards his son. 'Let them be shot'.

"Who will command the firing party? Who will do the shooting? There is a long silence. Then someone remembers a volunteer who had declared he would like to kill traitors with his own hands. I know him very well. He has his pockets full of love letters which he reads to his comrades, and another packet of them in his knapsack. He goes off with two soldiers to carry out his mission. The son walks with a swinging step but the old father drags his feet. They decend a slope and enter a cornfield. They await the firing party. Heavens, how long the time seems! A soft-hearted lieutenant who is in mourning for his mother, twists his hands nervously,

taps the trunk of a tree and picks up mechanically the dried leaves lying on the ground. A volley, then a second. I still seem to see the wandering glance of the old father. Later I learned that the young man had tried to flee. The escort caught up with him, however, and he again surrendered. The old man could not stand on his feet. They were forced to shoot him lying down.

"Some months later, two prisoners were brought in suspected of being 'comitadjis'. Both are old men. One is a reserve soldier. He wears, it is true, the costume of a peasant but his military cap, of curious shape, of violent color, shows he is a soldier. It may have been that he too, an hour ago fired on us. But he is a soldier, a prisoner of war. His expressionless eyes glance from one person to another, happy and confident. He is saved. But the second is probably a brigand. He implores, he takes oath volubly, but he has a look of cunning and just as if it were not his head that is at stake he bargains for it as if it were something he has to sell.

"I would have liked to have called out to him 'your head is at stake'. He became confused in his statements, more and more obstinate, he irritates everybody and in the end he is sentenced to be hanged. He remains before us in his rage, without a coat, clutching his blanket, the symbol of life in these countries, for in his mountains one may freeze to death in the night without it. He remains with his sly peasant's face, an old visage which resembles a bird's beak; he listens to the sound of words he does not understand, reading their meaning on the lips, in the eyes and on the hands of those addressing him. A shudder passes over his body, and with a gesture that reveals everything he throws, no, he drops, his blanket, his sole fortune, become suddenly a useless incumbrance. It is touching to see this single movement of a life accepting death. It is his death agony, the blanket lying on the rocks at his feet will never cover him again.

"Where is the sergeant? Here he comes. The sergeant is a Vinnese, a ladies' hairdresser. He has already tried his hand at hanging people. He will be charged with this execution. The Serb has turned his back to us. He goes off with the man who will end his life; he marches bent but with a resolute step, singing a long and melancholy Slav melody. He sings his own death song. He marches more and more proudly, drawing himself more and more erect at every step.

"He is two hundred yards from us, near a tree, but he still continues to sing. Everyone looks at him through their field glasses. As for me, I turn my head away. I think, oh man, oh man! I recall how the sergeant has often spoken to us at table of the women whose hair he had dressed, their negliges, blond hair, black hair, auburn curls - I see his hands in their soft, silken tresses, and the same hands putting a rope round a man's neck. It is finished. The field glasses drop. The column at once resumes its march. I throw a glance at the tree. The Serb, as if he were leaning against it, is upright, stiff, his feet touch his blanket, lying in the stones, still warm, but lost, purposeless, useless."

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